



The Citizens' Advisory Board

by Susan Elder

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

First Amendment, United States Constitution

The last part of this amendment, echoing ideas expressed in the Magna Carta, guarantees the public the right to request the government to remedy conditions which they, the public, find unsatisfactory.

Perhaps our forefathers could not have foreseen a need for public input on issues of environmental management--disposition of nuclear waste and environmental restoration--nor could they have dreamed of the need for "stabilization and disposition of non-stockpile nuclear material."

But they did imagine that there would be times when governmental activities might be called into question.

In 1994, the Department of Energy established a vehicle for local citizens to learn about and have input into several site-specific issues *before* problems arose. The Savannah River Site Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) is one of eight Environmental Management Advisory Boards funded by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and located throughout the country. These Boards provide advice and recommendations to DOE on environmental remediation, waste management and other related issues. Agency liaisons from DOE, representatives from the EPA and DHEC participate in Board meetings, along with Dr. David Moody, DOE Manager for the Savannah River Operations Office.

Retired nuclear engineer Donald Bridges is currently the chair of the CAB, and Harold Simon, who is retired from the military, is the vice chair. The rest of the board is divided into four issues-based committees, each headed by a chair and vice-chair.

The Facilities Disposition & Site Remediation Committee addresses the remediation of contaminated soil, groundwater, and surface water, risk management and assessment, the

regulatory process, and other issues pertaining

to environmental restoration. The committee also follows deactivation and decommissioning actions taken to reduce risk and costs following shutdown of excess industrial, radioactive, and nuclear facilities.

The Waste Management Committee reviews the management, treatment, storage and disposition of several types of nuclear waste and provides advice

to DOE on these activities. Principal goals of the committee are to see a reduction of risk to the public, workers, and the environment posed by these wastes, and to weigh different options of their management and disposal.

The Nuclear Materials Committee was established to study issues that involve nuclear materials (generally uranium and plutonium) that have an impact on present or future SRS activities.

Materials that were once a part of the nuclear weapons production cycle that are no longer needed for their original purpose but are not considered waste are considered part of this committee's area of consideration. Issues include used nuclear fuel program activities, nuclear materials management and nuclear materials integration.

The Strategic and Legacy Management Committee is involved in strategic issues relevant to the Environmental Management cleanup program, including performance assessments and long-term policy. Specific areas of interest are development and deployment of technology, the DOE-SRS budget decision-making process, future land use and relevant national

environmental policy.

Donald Bridges is passionate about the work he does with the Citizens' Advisory Board. "This is an exercise in citizen democracy," he told BELLA. "The Site represents a unique national treasure in a natural setting with pockets of expertise, and, once the cleanup work is done, that expertise can be applied to a new mission."

When asked to cite a few examples of what the board has done since he's been involved, Bridges said, "Spent nuclear fuel is one issue that that

the CAB has with SRS. Spent fuel is nuclear fuel that has been burned to limits of its use in a thermal reactor. There is spent fuel on the site now that came from certain types of reactors from off-site locations. DOE has not made a decision on how to dispose of this nuclear fuel and seems to be in no hurry to make a decision on disposition. DOE says it is safely stored at SRS in its current state for 50 years.

"The CAB encourages SRS to find a permanent storage solution and to act with a sense of urgency on the disposition of the spent fuel. One ready solution is to process the fuel in H-Canyon (currently shut

down) and dispose of the spent fuel as they are processing the Site high level waste. CAB also encourages DOE to use H-Canyon to develop the technology to reprocess spent commercial fuel if the nation makes a decision to reprocess the commercial fuel (not likely to be done at SRS). At any rate, H-Canyon should be used to deal with these problems *now*, not 20 years from now when H-Canyon may no longer be able to be made operational."

In addition, CAB wants to find a place to put the vitrified waste that was originally destined for Yucca Mountain,

Nevada. After years of preparation, the Yucca Mountain storage site suddenly was removed as a repository. The CAB has urged DOE to look into putting the vitrified waste in an alternative site in New Mexico.

Joe Ortaldo, retired engineer from SRS, served on the Citizens' Advisory Board for six years, as long as term limits allow, and also served as chair of The Waste Management Committee. "Most of what is presented to the different committees concerns what's going on currently," he said, "though occasionally there is discussion of plans for the future. DOE wants public reaction to all of that. For example, if a project is going to take longer than originally planned, nominally to save money, it will ultimately cost more to draw out the work. The committee will push to get things going."

Another focus of the CAB, Ortaldo stated, "is to keep SRS as a 'Continually Operating Site.' It is a huge area with many potential uses: Army Training, space for the development of small modular reactors (SMRs), space and development of technology for use of spent nuclear fuel, and, one of the Site's greatest outreach projects - the Savannah River Ecology Lab (SREL)."

Ortaldo continued, "I think it's important that DOE communicate with the public and that the public has a chance to give input. I enjoyed doing the work on this committee because I think it does a valuable service to the community. I would have served longer if it had been possible."

Though some of the 24 committee members are retired from the site with science or engineering backgrounds, many other fields are represented. There are administrative assistants, retired school teachers, welders and graduate students, wardens and insurance agents. They all have one thing in common. They care about what happens to this little corner of South Carolina. They care about the environment that is protected. They care about the jobs that are protected. And they care that the work that's done is done in a way that makes financial sense.

"By and large, DOE does a good job and we are, overall, satisfied," said Bridges. "We are presented information in layman's terms, primarily from DOE, but also from regulators, The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), DHEC, the EPA, and the CDC.

Gerri Flemming, Lead Federal Coordinator for DOE and the CAB, has

The Citizens' Advisory Board Mission Statement (summarized)

At the request of the DOE Assistant Secretary of Environmental Management or the SRS Manager, the Board may provide advice and recommendations concerning the following Environment Management site-specific issues: cleanup standards and environmental restoration; waste management and disposition; stabilization and disposition of non-stockpile nuclear materials; excess facilities; future land use and long term stewardship; risk assessment and management; and cleanup science and technology activities. The CAB may also ask, subject to Environmental Management approval, or be asked by Environmental Management, to provide advice and recommendations on any other Environmental Management project or issue.

worked with this board since its beginning here in South Carolina. She appreciates the work being done. “In addition to the technical help, they also give us help in reaching out to the community. We wouldn’t have that contact otherwise. I have been doing this for 18 years and I enjoy it as much now as I did in the beginning.”

The entire committee meets six times a year in various places around Georgia and South Carolina and the issues-based committees meet five times a year at The DOE Meeting Center, 230 Village Green Blvd., Suite 220, Aiken. All meetings are open to the public.

To find out more about the work the Citizens’ Advisory Board has done and what they plan to do, visit the website: cab.srs.gov

To find out more about what’s going on in a particular area of SRS, consider attending a meeting; schedules are posted on the website. And if you’re interested in serving on the board yourself, there’s an application there as well.

You can do it, you know.
The First Amendment says you can.

Susan Elder is a contributing writer to BELLA Magazine.

ANTIQUES in the HEART of AIKEN

SHOW AND SALE 2013

FRIDAY & SATURDAY
February 1 & 2
10:00 AM - 6:00 PM

SUNDAY
February 3
12:00 - 4:00 PM

Preview Party
January 31, 2013
7:00-9:00 PM
\$70 per person



Lunch & Snacks
Fri. & Sat. 11:30 am-4:00 pm
Sunday. 12:00-2:00 pm
Drinks & Desserts
Friday & Saturday
12:00-4:00 pm

AIKEN CENTER FOR THE ARTS

122 LAURENS ST. SW (803) 641-9094 AIKENCENTERFORTHEARTS.ORG

SRS Top Management Personnel

DOE-SR

Site Manager: Dave Moody

Deputy Manager: Zack Smith
(overall site landlord and responsible for cleanup mission)

National Nuclear Security Administration
Site Office Manager: Doug Dearolph (tritium mission)

SRNS

President & CEO: Dwayne Wilson

Executive VP & Chief Operating Officer: Fred Dohse
(site cleanup M&O)

SRNL

Director: Dr. Terry Michalske

Deputy Director: Dave Eyler
(technology development and deployment)

SRR

President and Project Manager: Dave Olson
(liquid waste disposition)

SHAW-AREVA

President and Chief Operating Officer: Kelly Trice
(MOX Fuel Fabrication Facility Project)

PARSONS

Senior Vice President: Lou Jackson
(Salt Waste Processing Facility Project)

SREL

Director: Dr. Gene Rhodes (radioecology)

AMERESCO FEDERAL SOLUTIONS

Site Manager: Ken Chacey (Biomass Power Plant)

WSI

Senior Vice President and General Manager
(site protective services): Randy Garver

U.S. FOREST SERVICE

Manager: Keith Lawrence

Deputy Manager: Anne Kiser (land management)

BELLA / SRS Supplement

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December 2012